



**ReSPA**  
Regional School  
of Public Administration

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# Ministerial Conference on Good Governance in the Western Balkans

12 – 13 June 2018, Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

**Provisional Programme and Agenda**

## Background

Public administration reform, together with the rule of law and economic governance, remains a key priority in the enlargement process. It is a cross-cutting issue of fundamental importance for success in political and economic reforms and building a basis for implementing EU rules and standards. The quality of administration directly impacts governments' ability to provide public services, to prevent and fight against corruption and to foster competitiveness and growth.

The Western Balkans face important challenges on public governance, which are common to all of them - although they differ in a number of ways and are at different stages of development. While most of the beneficiaries have Public Administration Reform (PAR) strategies, strategic plans do not always transpose the reform in all its complexity. Lack of implementation and monitoring capacities are among the main concerns.

In this context, development of suitable policy options remains generally poor. It is recognized that there is room for improvement of performance of our public administrations in the following areas: policy analysis, quality of legislative drafting and policy development, inter-ministerial coordination, public consultations and fiscal and regulatory impact assessments. In addition, costs for implementation of policies are not systematically calculated and budgeted. These elements largely explain why the beneficiaries continue to suffer from insufficient level of implementation of strategic documents and related policies.

It is widely recognised that there is need for further reform of the civil service system in the Western Balkan region to create the atmosphere in which a professional class of permanent civil servants, upon which holders of public offices rely, would emerge.

The overall administrative architecture still remains fragmented, leading to a proliferation of agencies with various accountability lines and other possible dysfunctions. In addition, severe coordination problems may appear and administrative procedures tend to be sector or law specific. For those countries that have enacted a modernised general law on administrative procedure, there is need to ensure the proper harmonisation of special laws.

In the age of reforms, the government should ensure the proper resources allocation for implementation of strategic framework by ensuring sufficient financial means and adequate civil service capacities. The line ministries should more confidently plan the budgetary allocations and rely on the domestic budget as a policy instrument. Therefore, sound and effective management of public finances should be perceived as an important part of public administration and related reform processes. In this respect, the system of managerial accountability and delegation of authority, as core principles of sound financial management, is supposed to be more developed and applied throughout public administration bodies. In most policy domains, financial impact assessments are not carried out yet.

Despite the absence of a comprehensive and specific accession-related framework, the policy dialogue on PAR has been strengthened, especially in those countries where a strategic framework on PAR and Public Finance Management (PFM) has been developed.

The Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) is the inter-governmental organization for enhancing regional cooperation, promoting shared learning and supporting the development of public administration in the Western Balkans (WB). ReSPA's purpose is to help governments in the region develop better public administration, public services and overall governance systems for their citizens and businesses, and prepare them for membership in the European Union (EU). Since its inception, ReSPA has contributed to the development of human resources and administrative capacities through capacity building programmes and innovative mechanisms of regional cooperation such as the exchange of good practices, networking, mobility schemes and development of know-how. ReSPA is also providing the specific expertise to its Members through direct in-country support instrument.

The main stakeholders involved in ReSPA activities are the Ministries responsible for Public Administration within the Governments of the Western Balkans, other line ministries and administrative bodies, to the extent that their area of responsibility is related to the improvement of public administrations and European integration (EI) process.

The main direct beneficiaries of ReSPA activities are senior and middle level managers working within the ministries and governmental agencies responsible for PAR and EI, other relevant line ministries in ReSPA Members and beneficiaries.

The citizens and businesses of Western Balkan countries, to whom public institutions deliver public services, are the indirect beneficiaries of ReSPA action.

## Content of conference

There is an increasing recognition among partner governments that public financial management is an integral part of PAR. Ministers of Finance are among the key decision-makers together with Ministers in charge of PAR and Ministers, or Heads of other institutions, in charge of coordination of European Integration process /NIPACs.

This Ministerial Conference will bring together Ministers responsible for Public Administration and Ministers of Finance in the Western Balkans and NIPACs with the aim to enhance the role of Ministries of Finance in the reform agendas of the region.

The conference also will bring together high level representatives of the state administrations dealing with PAR, PFM and EI, representatives of the European Commission (DG NEAR and DG BUDGET), OECD/SIGMA, international organisations, CSOs and other partners.

The key topics that will be discussed relate to the strategic framework for PAR, its financial sustainability, quality of policy planning and coordination, and monitoring and reporting on implementation of PAR strategies and adequate EU financial assistance for supporting reforms.

## Provisional Agenda

### Day I: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 08.15 – 09.00 | <b>Registration</b>   |
| 09.00 – 09.15 | <b>Welcome speeches</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Mr Josip Grubeša, Minister of Justice of BiH, Chair of the ReSPA Governing Board at Ministerial level</i></li><li>• <i>Ms Ratka Sekulović, Director of ReSPA</i></li><li>• <i>Ms Genoveva Ruiz Calavera, Director for Western Balkans, DG NEAR, EC (TBC)</i></li></ul> |
| 09.15 – 09.45 | <b>Keynote address</b><br><i>Mr Boris Koprivnikar (tbc), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Administration in Slovenia</i>  |
| 09.45 – 10.45 | <b>Panel I - Strategic Framework for Public Administration Reform: State of play, challenges and future plans</b><br><br><i>Panellists - Ministers responsible for PAR from WB6</i><br><i>Moderator: Ms Ratka Sekulović, Director of ReSPA</i>  |
| 10.45-11.15   | <b>Discussion</b>   |
| 11.15 – 11.45 | <b>Coffee break</b>   |
| 11.45 – 12.45 | <b>Panel II - Financial sustainability of public policies</b><br><br><i>Panellists: Ministers of Finance from WB6</i><br><i>Moderator: Mr Igor Lukšić, ReSPA Expert</i>   |
| 12.45 – 13.15 | <b>Discussion</b>   |
| 13.15 – 14.30 | <b>Lunch</b>  |
| 14.30 – 15.30 | <b>Panel III - Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of PAR and PFM Strategies and CSOs' perspective</b><br><br><i>Panellists: High-level representatives from the state administrations in WB (Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo*<sup>1</sup>)</i><br><i>Moderator: Mr Stevo Muk, ReSPA Expert</i>                                      |
| 15.30 – 16.00 | <b>Discussion</b>   |
| 16.00 – 16.30 | <b>Conclusions from the first day</b>   |
| 20.00         | <b>Dinner (hosted by Minister Grubeša)</b>  |

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<sup>1</sup> \* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ Advisory opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence

## Day II: Wednesday, 13th June 2018

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| <b>09.00 – 09.15</b> | <b>Registration</b>  |
| <b>09.30 – 10.15</b> | <b>Panel IV - Quality of policy planning and coordination</b><br><br><i>Panellists: CoG representatives from the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro)</i><br><i>Moderator: Mr Martins Krievins</i>                |
| <b>10.15 – 10.45</b> | <b>Discussion</b>  |
| <b>10.45 – 11.15</b> | <b>Coffee break</b>  |
| <b>11.15 – 12.15</b> | <b>Panel V - Strategic planning in the implementation of the EU financial assistance</b><br><br><i>Panellists: NIPACs/representatives of NIPAC offices in WB6, SIGMA representative</i><br><i>Moderator: Mr Ognjen Mirić, ReSPA Expert</i> |
| <b>12.15 – 12.45</b> | <b>Discussion</b>  |
| <b>12.45 – 13.30</b> | <b>Conclusions and final remarks of the Conference</b>   |
| <b>13.30</b>         | <b>Lunch</b>   |